

# *Ephesians: Mystery&Clarity//* “Christianity Enters Ephesus”//Acts 18:24–19:41; 20:22–32

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## **Announcements:**

- We announced this last week, but I wanted to make sure we really celebrated it: During the month of December, in a historic recession, this church gave \$1,000,000 to Gospel ministry:
  - **Part of that was to help us expand our facilities.** We’ve got some space needs and so we’re working on a permanent facility. You’ll hear more definite plans about that soon.
  - **A huge chunk of that million went to our projects in our community and around the world.** And I want to point this out... the organization we give most of our mission dollars through, the International Mission Board, has already been able to put people on the ground in Haiti meeting needs... So because of your generosity, Summit, you are represented.
  - I know that some of you want to know how you can give specifically to this terrible crisis... if you make a check out to us and mark it for that, we’ll make sure that it, 100% of it, gets to a team in Haiti that is *both* meeting physical needs and sharing the Gospel with the Haitian people.
- (10:45... college, crack of lunch. Come at 10:45, serve, and go at 12:30.)
- And, for those of you haven’t been around here for a while, it is true, our kid was born on Christmas day... as if it wasn’t bad enough to be a pastor’s kid; now he shares a birthday with Jesus. That’s a lot to live up to!

- A lot of people have been asking me how we’re doing; If you’ve had kids, you know that the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 weeks are pass/fail. If everybody is alive after 6 weeks, pass. So, we’re doing fine.

**Intro:** Let me begin our study of Ephesians with a little Bible teaching theory... You can only understand a book of the Bible if you understand why it was written. A lot of people try to study Ephesians as if it was just a deep explanation of Christian doctrine... and it is deep, and there is a lot of doctrine, but Ephesians is primarily a survival manual written to a struggling new church in a very hostile environment. If you study it only as a doctrinal treatise, or a list of instructions on how to live, you’re going to miss a lot of what is happening.

CJH Wright explained in his book, *The Mission of God*, that every passage in the Bible must be read in the context of the mission that God is on in the world; that God is demonstrating to all peoples in the world that He is the only God that is worthy of worship and He is the only God who can save. If you take any passage of the Bible out of that missional context, you’ll misinterpret it. And that’s what people do with Ephesians: they turn it into just a book of doctrine rather than a missionary manual.

**So, we’re going to look 1<sup>st</sup> at how the book of Ephesians fits into the story of what God is doing in the world.** And so we’ll start our study in Acts 18:24... where you have the story of Christianity 1<sup>st</sup> entering the city of Ephesus. These stories we will look at today are about the city, the people, and the situations into which Paul *wrote* the book of Ephesians.

First, a little bit about Ephesus:

- Ephesus was the leading city in the richest region of the Roman empire (so, in that way, a little bit like Roxboro)

- It was a port city. It was a hub in the region where boats would dock and their products would be distributed into all of Asia minor;
- Because of that it was cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic: people from all over the world came there to live; which created a lot of racial and religious tension as these people all lived beside each other.
- Ephesus was economically stratified; historians tell us you had the really rich, and the really poor living in close proximity (and you'll see that as we study Ephesians)
- It was an extremely spiritual city as well. There were over 50 different gods who had temples in Ephesus.
  - Just a little perspective: We here in RDU have one of the largest influx of religions anywhere on the East Coast. They have built here one of the largest Mormon temples and Muslims mosques south of DC, and they've announced plans to build one of the largest Hindu and Buddhist temples here in the next few years. Why? This is the educational and research hub of America, so people from all over the world come here to get educated and, from this hub, go out.
- The biggest temple in Ephesus was dedicated to the goddess Artemis.
  - *Here is the temple* (PICTURE)
  - *A little perspective.* This temple was 4 times bigger than the Parthenon in Rome. It was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.
  - The statue of Artemis was carved out of a meteorite that fell from the sky.
  - She was seen as protector of the city, the one who gave prosperity to the city.
- There was lots of spiritualism, occult activity in Ephesus.
  - They thought good and evil spirits were involved in just about every aspect of life. They had all kinds of tricks to keep the spirits and karma on your side—crystals, rituals, things to smoke, etc.

- Ephesus also had one of the largest libraries in the ancient world.

#### Acts 18:24

- First Christian really into Ephesus was a guy named Apollos.
- Pretty interesting guy: says he was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures... he was a great teacher...
- so he gets to Ephesus and starts preaching Jesus but (v. 25) says he didn't know the full story of Jesus so a couple who had been in Paul's church, Aquila and Priscilla, are listening to him and they're like "Yeah! Yeah! Sort of..." Imagine if you had a Muslim convert to Christianity who appeared on CNN and said, *"Jesus is the Son of God, and one day He's coming back in a sleigh with 8 tiny reindeer."*
- So, Aquila and Priscilla got him in a home Bible study and taught "the word of God to him more accurately."
- Then Paul shows up in Acts 19. And Paul starts teaching & while he's teaching... Someone raises their hand and is like, "Now, you keep referring to this 'Holy Spirit.' Who exactly is that?" Paul says, "You don't know who that is?" and they're like, "Yeah, we've never heard of him." So... there's still some holes in their theology.
- So Paul gets to work teaching this church. This continues on (19:10) *"for 2 years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks."*
- 19:11 says that, "God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul;" and one of those extraordinary thing was casting out evil demons.
- Well, there is a local ghostbusters squad, the 7 sons of Sceva, and they think that this is great... so they start going up to demons and saying, *"I command you to come out by the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches."*
- So, in one of the greatest stories of Acts, one of the demons responds to them, 19:15, "Uhh... Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?"

- I love that they've heard of Paul. (Gives you a little insight into spiritual realm... newsletter that has gone out about Paul... So this demon is like, "I know Jesus; I've heard about this cat, Paul. But you, not so much.")
- So **19:16** says the evil spirit leapt on them and "mastered" them... so that they fled out both naked and wounded. Naked *and* wounded.

- If you're in a fight where you get the clothes beat off of you, you are not just wounded physically, you're wounded emotionally, spiritually, psychologically. (Someone beats the pants off of you, that's a soul wound.)
- So clearly, the demon wins that round.
  - (you didn't know that was a biblical phrase, did you? beat the pants off)
  - (BTW, this is why Paul puts so much emphasis in Ephesians on spiritual warfare... this stuff is going on all around them. The people are like, "Did you hear about the demon that opened up can of whooptrash on Sceva? We don't want to be like that..." So Paul gives them that famous passage in Ephesians 6 on the weapons of spiritual warfare...)

- **(19:17-19)** This whole deal about Sceva's boys getting the pants beat off of 'em... **v. 17** "became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled... <sup>18</sup> Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their occult practices. <sup>19</sup> And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all (HP, Twilight – just kidding). And they counted the value of them and found it came to 50,000 pieces of silver."

- Now, this is a big deal. Historians say this would be somewhere between 6 and 8 million dollars. Hopefully they weren't library books they'd checked out.

**<sup>20</sup> So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.**

- Well, evidently a lot of people are coming to know Christ, because it gets the attention of a guy named Demetrius (You'll see his story starting in vs. 24).
- Now, Demetrius is this big businessman in Ephesus. He owns these shops where they make these little silver statues of Artemis. He starts getting worried because people are turning to God and they're not buying his little statues anymore... so he gets together all the businessmen from the city and says, <sup>25</sup> "...Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. You see, in addition to the statues, there was a whole tourism industry in Ephesus. So, you've got the tourist hotels; the taxi drivers; restaurant owners; the people who make the little t-shirt and bumper-stickers: *Artemis is my co-pilot; pictures of Artemis eating the name of Darwin;* <sup>26</sup> And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.
  - You got to love his logic here:

*"Paul says that the gods we make in our shops ain't real."*

Like everyone is going to go... "Gasp." You'd think someone would be like, "You know, he might actually have a point. I don't know..."

- But here is the deal: The worship of Artemis was central to the economy of Ephesus. In fact, the temple of Artemis housed the central banking system of Ephesus.
- Demetrius goes on: <sup>27</sup> And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the

great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her meteorite magnificence..."

- Here's what I love. **The early church made such a significant impact on the city of Ephesus that the entire economic order was disrupted.** It turned the entire city on its head and threatened to put idolatrous business out of business!
  - Imagine a move of God in Hollywood where every producer decides they are only going to make movies that glorify God.
  - Or, in Las Vegas if casino owners got touched by God and decided they were not going to offer gambling any more.
  - Or, they say that 90% of porn is shot in LA, and it brings in more \$ than the NFL, NBA, and Major League Baseball *combined*. Imagine if a move of God swept through LA and the porn kings turned to making Jesus films.
  - Or in Raleigh-Durham if the Duke/UNC fans decided they just wanted to get along and serve each other, and bless each other. Imagine what that would do to the whole sports economy. Just kidding. That's a godly rivalry.

So, Demetrius whips everybody at the local golf club up into a frenzy and they stage a big tea party in the amphitheater. (PICTURE of amphitheatre).

This thing held 25,000 people and it says that for 2 hours they cried out, "*Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*" (Diana is another name for Artemis; it's like her nickname, I guess; what her friends called her.)

Think about this: imagine a crowd larger than the one at the Dean Dome; and they are at the tone the UNC crowd is in if they were playing Duke and Duke was up by 1 and there was 10 seconds left and UNC had the ball... for 2 hours, they cry out, "*Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*" Calling out: Artemis. For 2 hours!

Finally, someone is like, "Who are we saying this to?" "I don't know." And so it quiets down and Paul and his friends lived to see another day.

*But this was Ephesus! This was what Ephesians was written to...*

Here I want to make my first 2 points for us:

**(1) The mission of the people of God is to expose the powerlessness of the false gods in their societies (19:23)**

- Paul goes in and preaches in a way that they begin to see that the gods they trust in are not real. In fact, they're kind of foolish. He's like, "You worship a rock that fell from the sky."
- That's what we have to do... we have to expose the gods that our society trusts in and show that they are not real gods and not worthy of worship.
- Now, you say, "Well, that was easy for Paul. They worshipped a rock." Or, you think, if you lived in a **foreign context** it would be a lot easier. I read a church planter in India who talked about seeing a woman bow down prostrate before a pile of cow dung in the middle of the road. She'd put little flowers in it; made a little shrine.
- We say, "Well, yeah... that's easy to confront her god... just tell her dudu is not worthy of her worship. But we don't worship gods around here like that." Yes we do, and, when you think about it, the gods we worship here are just as insane:
  - You got a frat guy who wakes up each weekend in his own vomit because he worships alcohol...? That seems to me to be kind of silly, too. (Now, you say, "Well, yeah... but he's not worshipping alcohol!" Sure he is. He gives his whole college career to engaging in it because that's where he thinks real joy is... So he throws away his career, his morals, his health, and his faith to party and have sex.
  - Or you watch the guy in Vegas who loses his house and his retirement account from his gambling addiction. That seems downright silly to me.

- Or, I see a businessman who alienates his family and ruins his health just so he can get ahead;
- Or I see people who are just obsessively worried about their future—whether they are going to make it financially. I’m like, “Should you really be basing all your security in the future on money? Money didn’t die for you, but Jesus did, and He’ll take care of you.”
- Or, I see a woman who throws away her family and her children so she can engage in an affair because she worships the god of romance... she feels like she’s got to have a new and exciting romance so badly that she’s willing to sacrifice anything for it... that seems as silly to me as bowing down to dudu.
- Here’s what we, the people of God, do: We expose these gods false gods and proclaim Jesus as the only way
  - Notice (19:23) says the first Christians were called “the way.” Paul taught them that name. Love that name.
  - *The way.* See the definite article? As in, the only way. It’s a reference back to what Jesus Himself said in John 14:6, when He said, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life.’ “The” way to God; not a way, but the way, the only way. We tell them that the god they are worshipping is not worthy of worship, cannot save, and not something to give their lives too.
- When Paul did that, it got violent. And (listen to this) ***when we challenge the gods that people worship, when we threaten to undo their whole way of living, you can expect the same kind of reaction that Paul got.***
- When you tell somebody their god isn’t real, things get ugly. Right? Try being a **newscaster who tells a golf star** that he can’t find real redemption in his religion and he can only find it in Jesus.
  - Let me give you a few examples: A lot of people in this area worship **knowledge and science**... I hear scientists making pronouncements about the world... science is great, but what I hear is the extreme confidence that scientists have in themselves and in their intelligence and

ability to figure it all out. Listen, science is a gift from God and we need to use it to the fullest extent! But the Bible would say that science is not something to trust your whole soul to, because scientists are fallible human beings and can be wrong. I read an article the other day in the *National Review* and the guy said, ‘*Trust science, but don’t trust scientists.*’ I thought, how? Science is done by *scientists*, and scientists are fallible humans who not only can be wrong, but sometimes they distort evidence to fit their agenda. Science is good and useful, but it’s nothing to make an absolute authority in your life and base your whole life on.

- And, furthermore, science has been unable to really provide answers to our soul’s deepest questions. Cutting-edge technology, perfect health... those things are great but they can’t answer our deepest questions, like who we are, and where we’re going and what the point of it all is.
  - Well, when I say stuff like that, people in this area often say, “He’s just anti-intellectual.” No, I’m just saying that Jesus is a more sure basis of knowledge about God and eternity, and that He is able to save us in ways that science cannot.
- Here’s one. Many people in our world make an idol out of **government**.
  - Reading a book right now on the Communist revolution of China in the 1950’s, what is striking is how people looked to the government to make everything perfect. “Chairman Mao” is our savior, and if you spoke against him you were blaspheming and could be killed.
- Al Mohler wrote an article this week explaining how the **green agenda** has become a full-fledged religion for some people. The assumption is that if the earth can be restored to a pristine state, than we will all be saved. Yes, I think we should take care of our planet. But it’s not mother earth that is the Savior, but Father God.

- But when you say that, if you point out that the green agenda is the most pressing question mankind faces, people villainize you and call you names.
- Some of you say, “You’re picking on Democrats.” OK, here’s one for you righties... **Many conservatives I hear talk like if we just had capitalism** and free business and individual rights then everything would be dandy... Listen, I love freedom, but freedom is not my Savior. I was totally free in the Garden of Eden and that’s when I really screwed things up. Individual freedoms are not my Savior; Jesus is the Savior.
- Many people trust **money**. So when I tell people they shouldn’t, and that they should trust God instead, and that one of the ways God tells us to show we trust Him is to tithe and give some of our money away, people roll their eyes and say “*He’s talking about money again,*” as if my main concern in saying that was the offering of this church.
  - You say, “I don’t like it when he talks about money.” No, you don’t like it b/c I am attacking your idol... I am concerned about your soul. Some of you live for money—it’s your security and your joy, and that’s why you’re stingy with it.
- You getting my drift? Preach against idols and Jesus as the only Savior and people get violent... They always have; always will. But that is our sacred mission.

**(2) God demonstrates His power over false gods by doing “extraordinary” things through us (19:11)**

- See in vs. 11 how it describes Paul’s ministry as doing *extraordinary things*? Specifically there it’s talking about Paul’s powers to heal and cast out demons—people were wiping their hankies on him and it was make their headaches go away. (Seriously, look at vs. 11)

- But there are 3 things that Acts presents as ought to be “*extraordinary*” about the people of God.
  - “**Extraordinary miracles**”: Extraordinary answers to prayer, like here. There is to be evidences of the supernatural in our lives that are just not explainable any other way.
    - (Interesting to me: twice in Acts Paul’s message is summarized as “preaching the kingdom” (20:25, 28:31). Paul’s message was about the fact that God would one day bring a kingdom where there was perfect peace and healing. And a lot of times what God does in Acts is He demonstrates that kingdom that we are preaching by healing someone supernaturally. Acts calls those “signs and wonders”—a sign that points to, or demonstrates the message.
    - Sometimes we, at this church, have gotten so into preaching the message of forgiveness that we have neglected preaching about the kingdom. God is not just forgiving us, He wants to restore us! Now, we ourselves can’t build that kingdom here, only Jesus can, but part of our ministry, like Paul’s, can be to give signs of it.
    - Extraordinary miracles and supernatural healings through our prayers is a sign of the power of Jesus and the kingdom He is able to bring.
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> extraordinary that Acts presents is “**extraordinary generosity**”
    - The early church gave generously, and shared with each other, and ministered to the poor, and they did it to such an extent that it was amazing.
  - The 3<sup>rd</sup> extraordinary in Acts is “**extraordinary joy**”, and that is demonstrated most by how God’s people respond to suffering).
    - In vv. 28–40 the whole town is in an uproar. Can’t you hear the new Ephesian Christians asking questions like,



- “Wait... if this message is true, why are his chief spokespeople persecuted and killed?”
  - If this is from God, why are we being mocked and put into prison and fed to the lions?
  - Why do we still suffer? Why are our people still getting sick? (Did you know that there is not a single place in Acts where God heals the sickness of a believer? He raises a few from the dead, but never heals a believer of sickness. It’s always people on the outside who get healed. Not saying that we shouldn’t ask for healing ourselves, because James tells us clearly that we should, just saying that Acts doesn’t *record* any healings of believers in the church.)
- They want to know ‘why’? Why do we still suffer?
  - Paul explains why... 2 Cor 6, using himself as an example, he says that he was beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned, often in pain, carrying about in his body a sentence of death... why? So he could demonstrate the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.
  - It is when God’s people suffer and suffer joyfully that they demonstrate that they have a joy that is fundamentally different than the world’s joy.
  - There is this terrible lie taught by TV preachers and really bad Christian books that God’s glory is most demonstrated by prospering us. God does prosper us sometimes, and when He does, we give Him glory for it. But anybody can be happy when things are going well. That’s ordinary joy. It’s when you are joyful when everything outside of you is going wrong that your joy is extraordinary.
  - God’s glory and His worth are demonstrated not by the fact that we don’t suffer, but by *how* we suffer. When you suffer and you have a deep, abiding joy that the pain can’t

take away, that gets people’s attention. That’s when your joy and hope are *extraordinary*.

- (God is glorified, yes, when sick people miraculously get well (that is extraordinary); but he’s also glorified when sick people die well because they are so wrapped up in and satisfied with God being glorified (that is also extraordinary).)
- **Extraordinary miracles; extraordinary generosity; extraordinary joy: these are the 3 ways God validates the Gospel in Acts.**
  - Can I say to you, candidly, as your pastor, that that’s what the problem is with some of us... It’s not that you’re “bad” Christians, you’re just so *ordinary*.
    - You’re a good Christian, but you don’t see exciting answers to prayer;
    - Yeah, you have joy, when things are going well... but when things aren’t going well you complain and whine;
    - You give a little, but your generosity is not extraordinary, it doesn’t inspire me.
    - You’re just ordinary... You start telling me about your Christian life and I want to go to sleep. That’s not God’s intention for you.

### **(3) Wherever the people of God go, they change the entire climate of the city**

- Here in Ephesus, the move of God was so significant that even the business community noticed.
- This is where I begin to dream. *What does it look like for an awakening to happen here that gets the attention of the business community, the universities?*
- **(MLK rally)** This past Thursday I had a real honor... I was invited to address the mayor, the city council, the school board, Durham county judges, and all the city government elected officials in honor of Martin Luther King day.
  - County manager: You are here because...

- city/county government officials gave us a standing ovation. I wish you could have been there.
- *We have so much more to do...* 5 groups God has placed on my heart: the homeless; prisoners; high school dropouts; orphans & foster kids, and unwed mothers.
- I don't know what we're supposed to do with them yet, but I want to do something so extraordinary that the city says, "That Summit Church... they are everywhere in RDU!"

**Acts 20:22–32**, Paul is speaking to the Ephesian elders, saying goodbye to them for good: *Acts 20:22, "And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there,"<sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.*

- This is a great passage because in the next chapter a prophet named Agabus comes to Paul does this big elaborate thing where he wraps his hands up and says, "The Holy Spirit says that if you go to Jerusalem, you're going to be beaten." And Paul says, "That's what He's been telling me, too."

<sup>24</sup> *But I \*do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.<sup>25</sup> And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.<sup>26</sup> Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you,<sup>27</sup> for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.*

<sup>28</sup> *Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.<sup>29</sup> I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;<sup>30</sup> and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.<sup>31</sup> Therefore be alert,*

- Real quick... Paul is aware that the demons he encountered and threw out in chapter 19 will try and re-enter the church. And if

Satan can't terrorize the church with demon possession, he'll mess them up with twisted doctrine.

- You see, when Satan fails on one front, he tries another. If he can't make a pastor fall to temptation, he'll sow disunity in the church. If he can't destroy you with temptation, he'll do it with discouragement. If he can't do it with discouragement, he'll puff you up with pride.
- Listen... Paul was aware of the spiritual forces at work all around the Ephesians. He tells them, vs. 31, "Be alert." Our enemy is always scheming to destroy us. ***You have an enemy always scheming to destroy you.*** Paul was aware of the powers of the spiritual world at work; I am afraid many of us are not.

<sup>31</sup> *Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears.<sup>32</sup> And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

**(4) Paul looked at his mission to the city as a matter of intensely personal obligation. So must we (20:26)**

- See that phrase in vs. 26, "Free from the blood?" Paul looked at his delivering the word of God to the Ephesians as a matter of blood: if he didn't do it then he would be guilty of their blood.
- *I can tell you without hesitation that this is how I feel about you and the city of RDU.*
  - There is always the temptation for me to water down the message; to stay away from controversial things; to tell you what you want to hear.
  - But I must deliver the word of God to you, regardless of whether I want to preach it or you want to hear it. And you need to pray for me that I will preach the word of God *fearlessly* to you.
- And yes, I read the letters and emails and comments on my blog but I'm telling you by God's grace they're not going to change a thing. At the end of the day I'm just a deliverer of the message, not its writer, and I answer only to God, not to anybody else. Plus,



I want to tell you everything God says, in love, because I know your life depends on it.

- I look at my obligation to you as a matter of blood.
- And, for you... One of the most important things that you can do in your life is figure out whose blood God has made *you* responsible for. Maybe it's your suitemates; the office where you work; people of a certain profession; maybe it's your children.
  - *Lights of Chapel Hill.*
  - Whoever it is, figure that out make it a matter your blood. Pray over them; plan ways to show Christ's love; reach out to them.
- So who is it? Who do you sense Jesus' heart for? Over whom specifically do you hurt over their lostness? Whose name has God put on *your* heart?
  - Listen, it won't be everybody; it will be a *specific* group. I had a friend in college who felt like he was called to the whole world. Where you going to serve after you graduate? "The world." I'm like, What part of it? He says, "All of it." I'm like, "OK, Jesus." It can't be the world.
  - Maybe its an unreached people group. A person God has placed on your heart.
  - Recently I read the bio of John Paton. Felt God had put a set of islands in the Caribbean on his heart. Problem is that a) that nobody spoke their language; and b) that they were all cannibals, and every foreigner had gone to them had been turned into beef jerky.
    - But God had told him to go, and so he went.
    - You ever think about what you would do if you showed up in a place where they eat foreigners and no one speaks your language? How do you start? Can't put out a sign that says "Sunday school at 9:00 on Sundays; bring a friend."
    - He ministered there for over 35 years. And he Isot so much. His biography said that all he really loved in the world was his wife, and she died in childbirth with his kid... he had to sleep on their graves for 3-

4 nights to make sure the islanders did not dig them up and eat them

- Later, after, a chief who came to Christ said, "When you first got here, we planned to kill you many times. Who was army who guarded your house each night?"
- When he left that island 35 years later, Paton said he didn't know a single native who hadn't professed faith in Jesus
- Before he went, someone had asked him why he was doing it, since he'd probably be eaten by cannibals. He said, 'That makes no difference to me. Eventually all of us will die and be eaten by worms. Eaten by worms or cannibals, you end up at the same place. He said he was driven by the thought that the people on those islands were "perishing without even the chance of knowing all God's love and mercy." And he knew God had made him responsible for it.
- *So who is it for you?*

#### **(5) Doctrine matters (20:28–31)**

- Paul tells them here that there will be people who will always try to dilute and twist the doctrine (see it..., vs 29, "**fierce wolves will come... speaking twisted things**") and that they must keep pay attention to the truth Paul is teaching them.
- It was a matter, Paul said, of life and death. Everything depends on believing the right stuff about God.
- This is pretty different from how people in our culture see truth. Our approach to doctrine is reflected by Thomas Jefferson who said in a famous letter to a woman, "*I don't care one whit what you believe about God, because it's deeds, not creeds, that count.*" Paul here says exactly the opposite. He says that the most important thing about you is what you believe about God—that determines everything in your life.

- So, the book of Ephesians is a deep, doctrinal book, because knowing the truth about Christianity matters. (In fact, the way the book of Ephesians is set up is pretty interesting:
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> 3 chapters are all doctrine. Not light stuff; deep stuff: Predestination; the nature of sin; God’s purposes on earth. 3 chapters of that.
  - Then chapter 4 opens up in Greek with the word “therefore,” and the next 3 chapters are 3 of the most intensely practical chapters in the Bible: how Christians see their work; relationships; marriage.
  - And what that little “therefore” tells you is that the deeds of chapters 4–6 flows out of the creeds of chapters 1–3.)
  - So, learn the doctrine. Study it. And I have a specific way you can do that... our small groups almost always study the part of the Bible I’m teaching from along with me. It’s a way of going much deeper into the passages than I can take you. They have produced this **excellent study guide**.
  - They say that what you remember from a sermon like this is tragically low, which I’m a little offended by. You’ll get a lot more out of this book, I promise, if you go through it with me. So whether you’re in a small group or not, pick one up today at your campus small group kiosk and study on your own with me.
  - And if you’re not in a small group, you can sign up for one right when you pick this up. *(There’s a small printing fee but if you don’t have the money and you want one you just tell them uncle J.D. sais you could bring the \$ next week)*

Before I close, I don’t want you to miss the biggest point of all here... This whole story in Acts 18–19 ought to make you ask one huge question:

- *What is this mission Paul is on?*
- *Who is this Jesus who can heal, who moves His people to extraordinary acts of kindness and gives them a baffling joy in the midst of pain?*

- *Who is this Jesus who is master of the spirit realm, whom demons fear just the mention of His name?*
- *Who is this Jesus who is so much greater than all the gods worshipped in the world that Paul has to tell people about him, even if it means that he’ll lose his life doing it?*
- *Who is this whose message that is so important that Paul considers giving it a matter of life and death?*

The Bible we study is not a set of obscure religious discussions or tips on how to live. We are talking about Jesus, the Creator and Lord of our universe who is so majestic that the world simply must know about him; and that your life is hopelessly incomplete until you do; who is so powerful that our rebellion against him is the worst possible thing we could have ever done; but whose offer of salvation is the greatest news we could have hoped for?

**The sacrifices of Paul; the miracles of Acts; the message of Ephesians, all point us to the greatness and glory of Jesus!**

**Do you know this Jesus? Have you received Him as Lord and Savior? If not, let us know, we’d love to help you find Him.**

# Bullpen:

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This is a war manual for people involved in the mission of God, not an ivory tower reference for theologians.

5 reflections:

- We must confront the idols:
  - We're going to change the spiritual climate of this city
    - What does it look like for a revival to happen in our Ephesus?
  - We do extraordinary things (answers to prayer; acts of generosity)
    - 20:25: I love the one word description... we "proclaim the kingdom"
  - Doctrine matters: We must devote ourselves to doctrine: knowing = right living
  - We are responsible for the blood of our city
  - Doctrine and institution can't replace passion: We fan the flames of our passion
- 
- Revelation 2:1–5: "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write... <sup>2</sup> " 'I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup> I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup> But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.
    - What if the greatest threat that the church faces is its institutionalism? We get good at church, get good at doctrines, get routine in ministry, but quit loving Jesus.

- This is a new kind of church, many of you came for that reason. Not like your church. We might become good and lose the passion.
- You don't need to hear most of what I have to say... nothing new, but returning back to what you know!

19:

Spiritual victories (vv. 11–12) Paul did extraordinary things: generosity and answer to prayer... so should we)

"Naked and wounded"—that's a bad day

Challenge to idolatries of the region

Keller:

- It says in Acts when Paul was in Ephesus that the Craftsman saw that his preaching had caused the whole region to turn away from Artemis of the Ephesians and that it was hurting their business. And what we see is that every time Paul preached he confronted the Idols that were in the culture. And whenever we preach the Gospel we must also be confronting the idols in people's lives and in the culture. Otherwise we will never bring any real change. That's been one of the scandals of the evangelical church. There are all these people having born again experiences but never demonstrating any real difference from the outside world. The difference from where Paul preached the Gospel was so great that it even affected the economy.
- Every culture is dominated by Idols. Artemis: money, making money, which is a good thing, then it becomes the ultimate thing. You have Athena who is reason. You have beauty, sexual pleasure.
- Any life that is not built on God's glory and God's Grace is going to be built on the deification of some other possession, quality object or whatever. Artemis was a god that the Ephesians thought had fallen from Heaven. It was a meteorite that had fallen close to Ephesus and some people thought it looked like the image of Diana and others thought it didn't but it didn't matter, they built a temple that was seven times bigger than the Parthenon and if you wanted

to be blessed in business you had to get the blessing of that God. So people came and of course it also became a real tourist spot. Like a Disney world of the ancient world and there was an immense amount of money that flowed through there. And it became a very wealthy spot. So when Paul challenges that, he threatens both the God who they believe can bless finance and then a God who is also making a religion that is making them very rich. In RTP there is child sacrifice practiced everywhere just like in the ancient world because they serve the God of their career, the God of Business. They sacrifice what is best for their children, because they need career and success in order to have a meaningful life. If you want to succeed in this economy you have to sacrifice your family. It is just set up to demand that you sacrifice your family.

Chandler:

- Apollos. Uhh... Kinda
- Have the gift of the HS? Haven't heard of him: still some holes in the ministry
  - Priscilla and Acquilla come and correct, but they don't even teach on HS
- Acts 19, So Paul comes.
- I love that they've heard of Paul (little insight into spiritual realm)... Know Jesus; heard of this cat, Paul. But who are you? Leapt on them and mastered them... naked and wounded. If you're in a fight where you get the clothes beat off of you, you are wounded emotionally, spiritually. That's not just a got a black eye I need a raw steak physical wound, that's a where's my mommy soul wound. Someone beats the pants off of you, that's a soul wound.
- The whole spiritual climate changes
  - Artemis
- Acts 20:22–28, with the elders
  - "If you go to Jerusalem, you're going to be killed. I know, that's what the HS has been telling me, too."
  - Keep the doctrine pure, there are people who will twist
- Revelation 2... it's possible to lose your first love
  - **PICTURE** In fact, the big statue of Artemis has her wearing a zodiac necklace, meaning that she controls all the spirits. She's the one who writes the fortune cookies

The reason I say this is a lot of people I hear teaching Ephesians do so as if it were just a book of doctrine. It is Paul's letter to a bunch of brand new Christians who are trying to figure out how to make Jesus famous in a completely pagan Roman world. But if you treat Paul's letters as just theological discourses, you're going to miss a lot of what Paul is trying to say and why he is trying to say it.

(Sometimes she is called Artemis, other times you'll see her referred to as "Diana." I guess that was her nickname; what her friends called her.)